Claim Amendments

1. **(Withdrawn)**
2. **(Withdrawn)**
3. **(Withdrawn)**
4. **(Withdrawn)**
5. **(Withdrawn)**
6. **(Withdrawn)**
7. **(Withdrawn)**
8. **(Withdrawn)**
9. **(Withdrawn)**

10. **(Currently Amended)** A method for manufacturing an optical fiber preform, comprising the steps of:

(a) heating a consolidated optical fiber preform within a chamber of a heating furnace having a first temperature profile of a hot zone of the heating furnace to allow a gob to drop under the influence of heat and gravity,

(b) removing additional glass from the preform in the heating furnace until a draw tip having a pre-optimized tip shape is formed, and

(c) transferring the preform to a draw furnace of a draw apparatus wherein a second temperature profile of a hot zone within the draw furnace is substantially identical to the first temperature profile.

11. **(Cancelled)**

12. **(Previously Amended)** The method of claim 10 wherein the step of heating is accomplished by at least one induction coil heating the preform.

13. **(Currently Amended)** A method for manufacturing an optical fiber preform, comprising the steps of:

a) heating a consolidated optical fiber preform within a chamber of a heating furnace having a first temperature profile of a hot zone of the heating furnace to allow a gob to drop under the influence of heat and gravity,

b) removing additional glass from the preform in the heating furnace until a draw tip having a pre-optimized tip shape is formed wherein the pre-optimized tip shape includes a tip taper having a ratio, defined as tip length divided by radius change over the tip length, of between about 5 to about 12, and

c) transferring the preform to a draw furnace of a draw apparatus wherein a second temperature profile of a hot zone within the draw furnace is substantially identical to the first temperature profile.

14. **(Currently Amended)** A method for manufacturing an optical fiber preform, comprising the steps of:

a) heating a consolidated optical fiber preform within a chamber of a heating furnace having a first temperature profile of a hot zone of the heating furnace to allow a gob to drop under the influence of heat and gravity,

b) removing additional glass from the preform in the heating furnace until a draw tip having a pre-optimized tip shape is formed wherein the pre-optimized tip shape includes a tip taper having a ratio, defined as tip length divided by radius change over the tip length, of between about 6 to about 9, and

c) transferring the preform to a draw furnace of a draw apparatus wherein a second temperature profile of a hot zone within the draw furnace is substantially identical to the first temperature profile.

15. **(Previously Amended)** The method of Claim 10 wherein the step of heating includes heating the heating furnace to a temperature between about 1800 °C and 2000 °C.

16. **(Previously Amended)** The method of Claim 10 wherein the step of heating includes heating the heating furnace to a temperature between about 1900 °C and 1950 °C.

17. **(Currently Amended)** A method of making an optical fiber preform, comprising the steps of:

prior to drawing optical fiber from the preform in a draw furnace, heating a tip of the preform in a pregobbing heating furnace separate from the draw furnace to form a pre-optimized draw tip on the preform, said pre-optimized draw tip after being formed having a tip taper with a ratio, defined as tip length divided by radius change over the tip length, of between about 5 to about 12, and causing a temperature profile of a hot zone of the pregobbing furnace to be substantially equal to a temperature profile of a hot zone of the draw furnace.

18. **(Cancelled)**

19. **(Previously Amended)** The method of claim 17 wherein the pre-optimized draw tip after being formed includes a tip taper having a ratio, defined as tip length divided by radius change across the tip length, of between about 6 to about 9.

20. **(Currently Amended)** A method for manufacturing an optical fiber, comprising the steps of:

heating a consolidated optical fiber preform within a pregobbing apparatus including an induction furnace having a first temperature profile of a hot zone of the pregobbing apparatus to form pre-optimized shape preform tip, and

transferring the preform to a draw apparatus including an induction furnace and drawing optical fiber therefrom, the draw ~~**furnace**~~ apparatus having a second temperature profile of a hot zone of the draw apparatus substantially equal to the first temperature profile.

21. **(Currently Amended)** A method for manufacturing an optical fiber, comprising the steps of:

heating a plurality of consolidated optical fiber preforms within a plurality of pregobbing apparatus, each apparatus including an induction furnace having a first temperature profile in a hot zone thereof to form pre-optimized shape preform tip on each of the plurality of preforms, and

transferring the plurality of preforms to a plurality of draw apparatus, each including an induction furnace and drawing optical fiber therefrom, the plurality of draw furnaces each having a second temperature profile in a hot zone thereof substantially equal to the first temperature profile.

22. **(Original)** The method of claim 21 wherein there are a lesser number of pregobbing apparatus than draw apparatus.

23. **(Previously Added)** A method for manufacturing an optical fiber preform, comprising the steps of:

heating a consolidated optical fiber preform within a chamber of a heating furnace to allow a gob to drop under the influence of heat and gravity and form a pre-optimized tip shape on a lower end of the preform having a tip shape includes a tip taper ratio, defined as tip length divided by radius change over the tip length, of between about 5 to about 12, and

transferring the preform to a draw furnace of a draw apparatus.

24. **(Previously Added)** The method of Claim 23 wherein the step of heating includes heating the heating furnace to a temperature between about 1800 °C and 2000 °C.

25. **(Previously Added)** The method of Claim 23 wherein the step of heating includes heating the heating furnace to a temperature between about 1900 °C and 1950 °C.

26. **(Previously Added)** The method of claim 23 wherein the pre-optimized tip shape includes a tip taper having a ratio of between about 6 to about 9.